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Subject: Spiritual Fruit-Culture.

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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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SPIRITUAL FRUIT-CULTURE.

“The woman said unto him, Sir, give me of this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”—JOHN IV. 15.

There is no fairer spot in Palestine than that which was the scene of this remarkable conversation. It was one of the most charming of valleys; on either side were beautiful mountainous hills; the climate was delicious. It is known among all Oriental travelers as the perfection of beauty. It was early the scene of the patriarch Jacob's love. Here he purchased possessions. He sunk a well. It was a rugged well. All the geological formations in that region are of limestone, filled here and there with caves. The rocks are everywhere seamed, and are not difficult to be wrought by hand. And when the well is sunk through that formation—not, like our own, dug in the crumbling earth, nor curbed with perishable wood, or with stone or with brick—when a well is sunk through such a medium, it stands forever. And that well remains to this day, answering its purposes as faithfully and as perfectly as it did an hour after Jacob himself first drew water from it.

Those Oriental wells often were so large that steps were cut around the interior down to the water. At other times, when they were not so large, the water was drawn. A curb was put around about the exterior, and over the stones of this curb, or, over a kind of rude wheel (a wheel without motion) a cord was put by which to draw up the water. It was upon such a curb—upon these stones which were laid about the mouth of the well to defend it—that our Saviour sat. It was at the sixth hour of the day, or twelve o'clock; and noon in that climate meant heat. No wonder that he was tired.

When this very smart, capable Samaritan woman came to draw water, she came, doubtless, with her bucket of skin and with a long cord—for each one brought his own utensils to the well, as there were no permanent fixtures for the use of all that came. By his

features, by his dress, and by his general demeanor, she knew at once that he was a Jew. Therefore, when he asked her for water, though she seems to have been a very kind-hearted person, generous (too generous!) she thought it necessary to assume toward him the air of a sectarian, and to remind him that he was a Jew, and that if he drank of the water from her bucket, it was as a favor. Thereupon arose a conversation. She said, "Why do you ask me, a Samaritan woman, you being a Jew?" Jesus replied, "If you knew who I am, matters would be reversed; you would ask favor of me instead of my asking it of you; for I could give you living water which, once drank, would quench thirst forever." Thus he gave an external symbol with an internal meaning; but the woman caught the outside only. And she said, "The well is deep." And looking him over and seeing that he carried nothing, she said, "Where is this water? You have nothing to draw with. Where do you propose to get it? Give it to me, that I come not here any more, neither draw." If there was any way that could economize labor, she wanted to know it. "If you have the secret of any outgushing spring in this region where I can get water without so much trouble, tell me where it is. If there is any way in which you can abbreviate my daily toil, I will thank you for that." The language is the language of one who would have been glad to have the bounty, but who did not desire the necessary labor by which to procure it. "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

It is not necessary to pursue the narrative beyond this point, although it is one of intense interest, and one of the most remarkable, because, occurring in the earlier part of our Saviour's career, it developed to this woman some truths which to others were developed only toward the very close of his earthly life.

The spirit of this woman has gone through time, and animates men to this day. The Christ that is the Master of us all, whatever term we please to call him by—Providence, or God, or Saviour—we are soliciting perpetually, as the woman did, saying, "Give me, that I labor not." It is not, "Teach me how to earn," or, "Teach me the method of obtaining"; it is, "Give me of this water, that I come not here to draw. It is wearisome, in the broiling noon. My steps are many. I am tired of labor. I desire the benefit without the necessity of obtaining it through appropriate toil."

It is on this subject that I wish to speak this morning—namely, the very prevalent disposition of men to seek religious benefit in some way which does not imply education and personal endeavor and responsibility. Men do not expect physical results except by

appropriate effort. I mean civilized men—men of our race and of our times. That there are indolent tribes, whose wants are few and supplied by nature, and who, their wants being so supplied, are always small and reduced in manhood, I do not deny; but in our time, in our nation, we are enterprising, ambitious, desirous of much, seeking much; and so far as physical gifts are concerned, although we know that they are dependent largely upon natural endowments, yet we know that much of that which is needful for the procuration of physical results is far beyond our reach or interference. We are schooled out of the notions of fate, and men of enterprise, studying the wise adaptation of means to ends, are necessary.

So parents do not pray that God would inspire their boys with a skillful trade. They put them out in apprenticeship, and pray God that the boys may attend to their business, and take proper steps to learn that trade. It is not supposed that the secret which is hid in the hand will ever be developed by prayer through divine grace. If a man has skill of hand, it is to be developed by training, and not by praying. In contrivances, in the skillful adaptation of things, men believe that we must come to results which they seek through the application of those causes which, experience has shown, determine effects.

There are those still who speak of *luck*. The number decreases with intelligence and with enterprise. Luck usually goes with the lazy, if it goes with any,—I mean the faith of it. As men become intelligent they care less and less for luck, so-called. But health is luck. Good habits are luck. Industry is luck. Frugality is luck. A sense of the fitness of time, of men and of opportunities—there is luck in that. Very little luck is there in waiting for things; in standing and hoping that something will fall down in your way, you know not how; that somebody will lose his wallet, that you will find it, and that the owner of it will not turn up. There are those who desire to be fed without earning what they eat. There are those who desire to be clothed without obtaining the raiment which they wear. But in intelligent classes men have understood that if they wish physical things—houses; implements; barns, and harvests in them; shops, and products in them; storehouses, and business in them—these are not to be had simply by reading and longing, nor even by praying for them. Did you ever suppose a man prayed himself into bank-stock, and into large farms, and into numerous ships. We have given over praying for these things.

We pray for ourselves, that we may be so guided that we shall think right, and so inspired that we shall labor right; but we

connect with our activity all the things which we desire in respect to our physical sphere. Men do not look for intellectual results except by the appropriate application of means to ends. We never pray for general knowledge. We do not teach our children to pray for general information. We teach them to use their eyes, and to employ their ears. We teach them to read. We teach them to keep company with intelligent persons, and learn, wherever they go, so to increase their knowledge. This is not inconsistent with the petition that God will sustain us in the exertion of our natural faculties. But we have got rid of the supposition that knowledge comes to us by any divine afflatus. It is the glory of the common school, the academy and the college, among a self-governing people, that they make us feel that if we want anything intellectual, we must get it by the adaptation of means to ends. Education, training, development, cannot be attained without effort. If knowledge is to be general, and still more if it is to be special, it must be striven for. If a man is going to have a successful law practice, he must press himself into it. Men labor for these things, and pray in connection with them. Intelligent prayer does not remove, nor lighten, in the slightest degree, the sense of personal responsibility, and the conviction that appropriate causes will develop the desired result.

So, no man prays for books. No man prays for newspapers. No man prays that he may have the benefit of schools and colleges without going through them. No man prays for the results of professional skill without the drill which leads to them.

There is one apparent exception to this universal rule. It is supposed by many that geniuses are separate and apart from men ordinarily; and that while the common people, without genius, are obliged to work for what they have, men who have genius come to success without labor. We are not wrong in supposing that there is such a thing as genius. *Genius* is only another word for a more highly organized condition of the brain. When men's brains are organized at the lowest state, they are merely susceptible of having an impression made upon them. In the intermediate state, the brain has sufficient vitality to act under the effect of stimulus. In a still more highly organized state, it has the power to act, not as in the stage below, by the application of stimulus, but by self-stimulation. It is so strong that it acts of its own self. Therefore its action is called "automatic." What we call "genius," belongs to one whose organization is so fine and large that it acts by its own stimulus; and where this is the case in the whole brain, it is universal genius. If it is on the art side alone, we have an art-

genius. He is a genius in but one direction. A man is a genius in the direction in which his faculties are highly organized.

Now, it is certainly true that men who are organized highly work more easily and more fruitfully than others; but it is not true that they do not have to work much. It is not true that men ever have results, even if they are men of genius, for which they do not labor. That is indispensable. There is no man that lives who feeds on miracles. All men are under the government of God, which is a government of cause and effect, whether it be easier or harder.

The eagle gets over the ground a great deal faster and easier than the ant; but the ant gets over the ground. And the eagle, although he gets over more ground in a second than the ant does in an hour, does it by work of wing, employing muscular power, just as the ant does.

So the highest natures, although they get over the ground much faster than the lower and more vulgar natures, do it in the same way. Their power is greater, but it is under the same laws. And a man who is never so much a genius is not released from the responsibility of study, of practice, of education, and of applying means to ends.

If a man is near-sighted, and feeble-sighted at that, and reads with extreme difficulty, spelling every word as he goes along, he toils a great deal more than I do, who, looking at the page, take in at one glance the whole verse, though I take it in by the same method that he does. When you analyze it and trace it to its elements, it is the same act, performed under the same law, by the same operation. The only difference is in the rapidity—and that comes by practice.

Men who have intuition instantly see into things; but the seeing is by the same process, and in accordance with the same rule, as it is in the case of those who go through slow and delayed and grudging steps. Because a man is a genius, it does not follow that he is one to whom everything is revealed—to whom thoughts come, and in whom emotions arise—without any preparation or responsibility. He may be a genius in poetry; but the most eminent poets have been the hardest students since the world began. He may be a genius in military affairs; but no man ever trained himself more assiduously in military affairs than Cæsar, or Napoleon, or Frederick, or any other of the greatest generals. It is *work* that furnishes the fulcrum by which genius labors.

In general, men believe that if ordinary people are to be intelligent they must study. If they are to have skill in any direction,

they must practice for it. This is specially true as you go up. If you take the higher range of mental experience, no man is supposed to be a good metaphysician by nature. Men come to skill in metaphysics—not by nature, but by practice; by endeavor. The higher forms of intellection are by special endeavor. No matter how much musical endowment persons may have, they do not feel that they are musicians till they have had long and patient drill. The nightingale asks for no master, and sings without notes, and sings to the night, and sings to the stars, and sings to itself; but it sings only what the nightingale thinks and feels. Much as we talk of the sweetness of the nightingale's music, what is there in ten thousand nightingales, singing through ten thousand moonlit nights, out of the thickets, that can compare for one single moment with a symphony of Mozart or Beethoven or Haydn? There is thought, there is moral feeling, there is affection, there is hope, joy, aspiration, grief, wailing, there is the whole range of life, in a true musician's work; but in the singing of birds there are a few notes which mean what you make them mean, but in and of themselves are they nothing. He that is called of God to be a musician, is simply called to prepare himself to be a musician. His knowledge comes by study and training.

Some persons are born more graceful than others; but no man becomes entirely graceful without culture. Training in manners, in postures, in athletic exercises—especially those which are designed to give grace and beauty, and personal accomplishment or embellishment; all that relates to the esthetic part of the mind of man—these things produce their fruit. All men, seeing what they desire, seek it by the application of ascertained causes which produce such and such effects.

It is only when we come to the next higher range of faculties—to the moral sentiments—that men begin to act on an entirely different scheme. If it is drill of body; if it is common sense; if it is the application of thought-power and will to the commercial affairs of life and mechanical operations; if it is anything which relates to the school; if it is the cultivation of thought and taste; if it is the achievement of results clear up to the sphere of moral sense and religious feeling—the law is without variableness or shadow of turning. We have that which we seek, and seek by proper methods. Though men are taught, and justly, to pray for the things which they earn, and which they gain by studious endeavor, yet every man feels that there is such a relation between cause and effect that it is absurd to ask for anything for which he does not labor.

I ask God to bless the season; but it never prevents me from studying the nature of plants, and discovering their laws, and bringing to bear my knowledge of them in their cultivation, treating one according to its nature, and another according to its nature, and using my experience in the application of causes to the production of effects. In business, the great bulk of men's lives is spent in gaining results by the application of means to ends, according to the methods which experience has taught us to be best.

But when we come into the realm of religion, there is the impression that God works there by the efficiency of the Holy Ghost, and that there is in that particular realm such an irresistible sweep of the divine Spirit, that the peculiar and distinguishing qualities of Christian experience fall down from heaven upon us of their own accord, as the dewdrops fall upon the flowers—that they are put upon us by the Spirit as clean raiment is put upon the child by the mother. Men have the impression that religion is something so different from other exercises that there is a different order and a different law that govern it. There is a lingering feeling that while we must work for worldly ends, we must wait for spiritual ends; that while we must apply causes for the procuring of results which relate to the intellect or the bodily or the social sphere, for the higher spiritual elements we must pray.

Now, we must pray for everything that it is proper for us to have. We must pray for the highest things, and for the lowest. But I affirm that there is no more reason that we should pray for morality than for corn. There is no more reason that we should pray for meekness than for flowers. There is no more reason that we should pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost in changing our hearts than in changing the condition of our bodies, if we are sick, to a state of health. It is proper to pray in either case, because we are working in a double sphere of activity—the physical and the spiritual. Whether we are working for the body, for the intellect, for the social life, or for the life of the soul, we co-operate with the divine mind; and there is a reason for supplication in one part of the mind as much as in another. There is no more occasion for praying in the realm of moral thought than in the realm of the intellect; no more in the realm of the highest faculties than in the realm of the lowest. There is just the same reason for studying and laboring for the things which pertain to the kingdom of righteousness that there is for laboring for the things which pertain to the kingdoms of this world.

To a large extent this impression springs from the idea that religion is something other than the action of a man's own nature;

that it is in such a sense a divine creation that it cannot be said to proceed from the normal action of the faculties of the human soul. There have been those who supposed that a new set of faculties was created upon conversion. There are those who suppose that the action of every part of a man's mind is so inherently wrong that nothing which a man can think or feel or do can be properly called religion. There are still others who believe that there descends from God a mystic grace, an intangible and inexplicable element; and that it is the descending of this upon the soul that constitutes its religiousness.

Religiousness is simply right-mindedness toward God and toward man. He that carries all the faculties of his being reverently, lovingly and obediently, according to the divine law, is religious. To be religious is to act in accordance with the laws of the mind from the highest to the lowest of its endowments. Although in the religious life there are some actions and experiences which are higher than others, yet all right actions are religious. You have not two minds, one to think about the world with, and the other to think about God with. You have not two hearts, one of which is used for religion, and the other of which is used for natural purposes. That mind which you have according to the requisition of God is always in harmony with that nature which he has given to us.

People have had this impression—that religious results come, not by education, and not by specialized causes for certain effects, but by some mysterious power which results from the efficiency of the Holy Ghost. Now, such is my belief in the reality and existence and agency of the divine Spirit, that I think I should have no hope and no faith as a minister and as a laborer for the enfranchisement of mankind, if it were not that I believed there was an all-prevalent, vitalizing, divine Spirit. I should as soon attempt to raise flowers if there were no atmosphere, or produce fruits if there were neither light nor heat, as I should attempt to regenerate men if I did not believe there was a Holy Ghost. I have faith in the divine Spirit spread abroad over the whole human family, which is really the cause of life in the higher directions; and it is this faith that gives me hope and courage in all labor.

Nevertheless, this divine influence is not irresistible in such a sense as to relieve men from the responsibility of developing every one of the spiritual elements. The Spirit of God does not sweep over the mind and cleanse it from everything that is wrong, and institute in it everything that is right, and then maintain it in its regenerated state by divine efficiency. God wakes up the soul, and then says to it, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trem-

bling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." That is the ground on which we work. The inspiration of the divine mind gives us possession of our own faculties, and we are to labor with them, applying the proper causes for the attainment of given results, as much in religious as in secular things.

In the light of this explanation, I remark, first, that men wish to be converted so that the whole field shall be cleared, and so that they will have nothing to do but to go right forward in the new life. They believe, as it were, that if God will only touch the rock, and let the springs of sanctified affection gush out, then, just as soon as they have found their channel, their life will be like the running of a brook out of the mountains and through its channel, down to its destination, unchecked and undisturbed. They think that if they are once converted, they are converted for all time. It used to be taught that, once a deacon, always a deacon; once an elder, always an elder; once a minister, always a minister; and, according to this general scheme, once converted, always converted. And so men feel that when God takes hold of a man's heart, when the man is regenerated, when by the power of the Holy Ghost he is translated from the kingdom of Satan and darkness into the kingdom of light and of God's dear Son, it is a work that is completed. I say it is not a completed work.

Here is a man who has been lying around, a lazy vagabond, sucking his substance from those to whom he is related, and he is taken to the great West, put upon a hundred and sixty acres of ground, and told to work out his own living. He has his ground; he owns it; he is no longer one of the lazzaroni; and he goes to work on his farm. It is not converted yet. It has on it thorns and briars and weeds, and it brings him in nothing, at first; but he goes to work, and by his industry and application begins to develop its resources. He is an honest yeoman, he is the owner of property, and he has been converted from a street-beggar into a man of means and respectability; but his own conversion is not complete, any more than the conversion of his farm is complete, which he has begun to cultivate, but which needs much tilling to bring it to a state of perfection. When a man is converted, he has a new start—that is all. The work of his conversion is not carried through.

Now, no man was ever taken from darkness to light so that he saw clear through to the kingdom of glory at one glance. When a man is taken off of the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, the angel comes to him as he did to Peter, knocks off his

chains, opens the door, and says, "Rise up, and go out." And when he has risen up and gone out, he has to find his own way to his friends, and has to get his living as best he can.

In regard to religious things, men are under precisely the same necessity of drill and education, and of the application of means to ends, that they are in any other sphere of life. If a man, therefore, expects that there is any labor-saving conversion, he is greatly mistaken.

"But," it is asked, "when Paul was converted, was not his conversion instantaneous?" Yes, his conversion was instantaneous—only in that sense, however, in which the conversion of any other man is instantaneous. His will was changed at a definite point of time; and that is so in the case of nearly everybody who is converted. "Was he not made an apostle almost in the twinkling of an eye?" No. He was struck, and dumfounded, and blinded, and confused, and was sent to Damascus; and he lay crying and praying until Ananias was sent to him to tell him what the experience which he was going through was for; and then he went into an experimental apostleship. He began as a little child. There is unquestionable evidence that he came more and more to the disclosure of himself as God's grace was manifested in him. He was no exception to the universal law.

If men who want to be Christians, instead of waiting for some great shock to come upon them, would begin to be Christian at once, how much better it would be! We will suppose that a man is a spendthrift, who has got money without much scruple, and let it go with still less. After a time, hearing a discourse on the folly of dishonesty and spendthriftiness and the wisdom of honesty and frugality, he says, "If it should please God to make me an upright, safe, snug, frugal man, I believe I would reform." What would you say to such a man? I would say to him, "Do not stand waiting till God makes you a man of frugality and integrity. You can make yourself one if you try.

There stands a dishonest man, a thief, (if in our day such a man be considered dishonest) and at last some superstitious influence comes over him, and he wants to be an honest man; and he says, "Oh, that God's grace would only make me an honest man!" The apostle says to him, "Let him that stole steal no more." That is the way to get out of thieftom into honestdom.

A worldly, selfish, proud man, a man who is anything but true and right, says, "I think that if God would convert me I would begin to live a Christian life." Well, why do you not begin to live such a life now? Do you suppose a boy is ever suddenly converted

into a carpenter? He is apprenticed to a carpenter, and after he has served a certain term, he is a carpenter himself. Do you suppose a man is ever converted into a lawyer at once? At first he is a scrivener; and by and by, when, by study and practice, he becomes acquainted with the principles of the law and the affairs of the profession in which he is employed, he deserves to be called a lawyer. Do not wait, therefore, for the fruits of a Christian life before you begin to live like a Christian. Begin instantly. You have capital enough to begin on.

No man should wait for conversion. That is conversion when a man, having been wrong, wants to be right, and begins to be right. That is as much as conversion amounts to anywhere. No man, being converted, is anything else than a sinner trying to become better. When persons are brought into the church as converted persons, do you suppose we think they are perfect, or anything like it? Do you suppose in the sight of God they are other than poor, weak creatures who, having gone astray, are feebly striving to get into the right path? They are scholars. They are pupils. They are learners. "Follow me," said Christ, "and learn of me." They are Christ's disciples, going to school, where they can be taught and helped to make attainment in the Christian course. They are like pupils who undertake to learn arithmetic, or grammar, or history, or any other branch of instruction, and go where they can obtain the needed assistance. The law which governs men in the attempt to achieve results in a Christian life is not different from the law which governs them in the attempt to achieve results in general intelligence. If your conscience is to be made a spiritual conscience, it is to be made so in accordance with the same analogies by which you are made wise in the application of business in any direction. I proclaim the universal law of education and development which runs through the whole scale of the faculties, on the religious side of man as much as on the secular side.

Men often hope, after they are converted and have a name to live for, that in many respects they are better. But they tend to ask God to wean them from their sins and faults, so that they need not have the trouble of doing it themselves.

Here are men who are addicted to many sins of the flesh. Men's fleshly sins come largely with their organization. Men who are built long, lean, bloodless, and never know what temptation is, can have very little pity upon men who are short, and chunky, and very sanguineous, and have immense basilar appetites. Two such men cannot understand each other. A man who is not organized so as

to be naturally greedy cannot understand how that man can make such a pig of himself. He never felt like a pig. And the man who has these fleshly appetites says, "I may be a glutton, and I may drink to excess, but I never was mean enough to pinch a penny till I made it squeal, as that man does. I am a generous man." Every man is conscious of his own temptations to sin, and that he is not the victim of this and that besetting sin. Every man knows that he cannot be guilty of two opposite sins at the same time. A man cannot be a spendthrift and a miser during the same instant. A man does not love fleshly enjoyments at the same time that he is only addicted to the vice of selfishness.

But when men find themselves beset by these appetites they pray against them. Sometimes they set a day apart in which to pray. I do not ridicule prayer. Prayer is right. And if a man eats too much, I think he does a very good thing to pray to God; but his praying will not benefit him if he does not do anything else. It is perfectly right for a man to ask God to help him if he drinks too much; but he does not do enough if he only prays.

What would a man do if he was sick in his body? What would a man do if he had the dropsy on him, or a fever beating in him? He would pray God to bless him; but he would do more than that: he would send for the doctor, and take medicine, or take the necessary steps to get well.

If a man is organized so that he is subject to the lusts of the flesh, it is not enough for him to sit down and pray God to help him. You must deal with yourself as one having a moral disease, and apply the proper remedies. Do you suppose that if a man gorges himself with flesh meats, and is feverish, he can be relieved by simply praying? Is there any use in a man's praying for angelic influences when he is feeding himself with hell-fire all the time?

Avoid those things which over-stimulate. Avoid the places where you fall easily. Avoid all things which stand connected with your ruin or danger. If a man's soil is swampy, and breeds malaria every year, and needs draining, does he pray that God will drain it? No, nothing of the sort. And God would not drain it if he did. He does not put a premium on laziness for anybody's sake.

Men have sins of temperament—anger or insensibility; dullness or quickness; all manner of antithetical states. Some men think they must be very wicked because they are so sensitive and so subject to anger. Anger is a bad thing where one has too much of it, as fear is; and there are sins of excessive sensibility and of anger

a growing out of it. On the other hand, there are sins of excessive insensibility. There are men who never feel, of their own accord, and cannot be made to feel. There are some men whose nerves lie along near the surface of the skin, and there are those whose nerves are buried deep beneath the skin; and the former are quick and sensitive, while the latter are slow and dull; and their temptations and sins are on different sides of their natures. These temperamental sins, though they are not to be dealt with without prayer, and the influence of the Divine Spirit to urge us to something higher, are to be overcome by training and by education. Pray that God will restrain your wrong tendencies; but take care, when you pray, that you help yourself. Remember that the responsibility is on you.

If I have bought a pair of fiery horses, and I sit behind them to make my experimental ride, I do not think it unmanly to commit my soul to God and ask him to protect me; but I do not throw the reins down on the dashboard and trust to Providence alone. I pray, to be sure; but I watch my horses all the time. I drive with all the care that is possible; driving for everybody on the road, as every good driver does, as well as for myself—for that stupid boy who has turned out the wrong way, and for that drunken man who is taking both sides of the road, and so on.

When a man is going down into life, and he knows what his weakness is, whether it be pride, or selfishness, or anger, or any other of these besetting sins, he should, in prayer, ask for protection; but prayer will not secure that blessing to him except through his own exertions. He must be waked up to will and to do of God's good pleasure. So, take care of the general results, praying for the curing of this fault and that fault while you labor for that which you seek in prayer.

How absurd it is to see men going on and enjoying themselves in sin as long as they are prosperous, and then beginning to pray when they are whelmed in trouble! Down into the family of a man who has never known sorrow, swoops an angel, and takes a little child. This man, full of feeling as a well is of water, is all broken down, and he pours out a torrent of grief. You cannot touch him without causing him to gush tears. He says, "I have been a great sinner, and God has afflicted me; and I want to live a better life, and I mean to be a different man." Oh, that this man could know that, if this flood of feeling could be turned on the mill-wheel of right endeavor, it would clear him! But it is only a momentary swell; and in the course of a fortnight or a month, he is about as he was before. In general, if left to chance, that is about

what men do. That is about the way with men when they leave things to the Spirit of God.

Men pray for full Christian grace in the spirit in which the woman of Samaria, impelled by the desire for indulgence, said, "Give me that water, so that I shall not need to come here to draw." "Deliver me from the labor and pains of developing in myself that which I want," many would say.

No child, I suppose, when she is going to follow the notes, and sees "*p*" and "*pp*," ever prays, "Now, Lord, make me play according to those directions, 'piano' and 'pianissimo,'" and then sits motionless in front of the instrument. What does she do? She not only prays, (if she does pray,) for God's help, but she tries to follow the directions herself.

Persons pray that they may be humble. Here is a big strong man who in the morning prays that he may be humble through the day; and in order to make it more effectual, while kneeling he puts his head clear down in his chair; and in order to make it still more effectual he talks in an official voice. When his prayer is finished, he gets up, and straightens himself, and goes to his store, and storms about his business. He is not going to see things go to rack and ruin because nobody feels responsible. And the man quite forgets his prayer. He leaves that for God to take care of. When he comes home at night he has some mournful feelings about the way in which he has conducted himself through the day. And the next morning he prays for humility again. The experience of the previous day is repeated. At night his feelings are mellowed down once more (for men almost always have the grace of humility when they are sleepy!); and so he gets through another night.

Now, the fault did not lie in the fact that the man prayed God to make him humble. The fault lay in this: that he thought the prayer relieved him from the responsibility of training himself—from the necessity of the yoke and the harness. Men pray for meekness, and yet when they are brought into circumstances which call for the exercise of meekness they forget their prayer.

A man is well-womaned, and he prays God to give him meekness. The companion that it has pleased God to yoke him with faults him about something in which he knows he is right, and is perfectly sure she is wrong; and there occurs one of those scenes which may be called the chromatic periods of life. The prayer in which he prayed for meekness has hardly dried up on his lip before he flies into a temper. He has just asked God to give him meekness, and God sends him an opportunity to learn to be meek; and when he sees the lesson he will not read it nor practice it.

A man prays that he may have a heart to love God and his fellow-men; and when he opens the door to go out, a miserable, poverty-stricken boy stands on the steps, and asks him to help him; and he says, "Go away, you brat," and uses some other words which are not necessary for eloquence, and drives the boy away. Where is his prayer?

You pray for one and another blessing, and God sends his angels to answer your prayer, and they come in queer guises, and you do not recognize them, so you reject the blessing. You pray for strength and there is the anvil, and there is the hammer to beat out that strength with; but you do not like labor. You prefer to get strength by praying for it. You pray for gentleness, and when you are provoked, instead of being gentle you are resentful. The answer to your prayer came in a way in which you did not want it to come. So you are not benefited by it. You are like the woman who said, "Draw for me. Get for me this living water, so that I shall not have to come here to draw."

Nobody wants to draw. Everybody wants God to draw for him. And all through our Christian experience we are perpetually going wrong, not in the sense of our dependence on God, not in the necessity of divine influence and help, but in the truth that there is nothing that we attain by the Divine Spirit which we do not attain by drill, by education, by self-help. It is through these that the Divine Spirit stimulates and develops in us those things which we need and pray for.

Men say, "Will not such teachings lower a man's sense of his dependence upon the Holy Spirit? Are you not encouraging a kind of vain reliance upon an arm of flesh? Are you not giving men to suppose that they work out unaided all that they need?" No, I am not. It is not necessary for men to understand any such thing. I teach you that you are to work out your own salvation, God working in you. I teach you that you are the disciples of Him who was made perfect, perfecting himself through suffering, as your Captain. I teach you that God's laws under which you live are uniform—the same in respect to the lower, the middle and the higher faculties of your life. I teach you that way which has been proved and tried by all who have made eminent attainment in Christian experience. I teach you that which ought to be simple as A, B, C, to you. Otherwise, you waste your life in darkness. I teach you that which will make your Christian life easier, and enable you to go on from strength to strength, every one of you, till you shall stand in Zion and before God.

Look not less to God; but let not looking to God be a substi-

tute for your drill and enterprise; and remember that what you sow you shall also reap. Indolence, pride, arrogance, assumption, presumption,—if you sow these, you shall reap results corresponding to them. If, on the other hand, you sow diligence, intelligence, perseverance, singleness of heart, faith, trust, hope, you shall reap the fruit of righteousness.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We are emboldened to draw near to thee, our Father, with supplicating thought, from all the memory of thy goodness—especially from the memory of thy goodness to us. Ever since we were born, thy ways have been ways of mercy. From thy providence we have derived great bounty. Thy kindness has attended our footsteps. Our chastisements have been fewer than we deserved. Out of thy love have come to us great blessings. We look back to behold how much we have been builded by the gifts of thy hand. Thou hast given us strength by making it needful to us. Thou hast given us patience by laying upon us troubles that required it. Thou hast taught us by the things which we lacked. Thou hast inspired us with a holy ardor and zeal.

We rejoice in all that thou hast done by thine hand, working through time, and the means thereof. We rejoice that thou hast also ministered of thine own self unto us. We rejoice that thou hast imparted thy Spirit to dwell in us, and to stir up within us every spring and fountain of things right and good. We rejoice that thou hast ministered to us from out of the invisible sphere—though not without our prayer and watching and activity, and crowning our labor more abundantly than we asked or thought.

We rejoice in believing that thou art administering, not slenderly, not penuriously, giving us as little as thou canst. We rejoice in believing that thou art one that abounds in mercy. Overflowing is thine heart evermore. We are not served by thee as we serve each other. There is no selfishness in thy nature. Thou takest thy measure of mercy, not from our want even, but from the greatness of thine own heart. So that thou art evermore doing exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think—yea, more than we know. For thy mercies are greater than now we discern. Hereafter we shall look back to see how much broader were thy ways for us than we thought. When we seek to walk in a narrow path, behold how it stretches invisibly out on either side! We pluck but few clusters; though thousands wait for us. We rejoice in the bounty of such a God. We worship such a nature. We magnify the grandeur of such a goodness, endless, full of vicissitudes, and yet adapting itself to our want all the way through life, and preparing us for an entrance into that higher life where thou wilt disclose thyself yet more radiantly.

We rejoice, O Lord, that we may believe that out of this sphere, and that out of its experience thou art ministering for us a preparation for that nobler and higher life to which we are aspiring. We commit ourselves still to thy guidance. But we would not rely upon thee inertly. We desire to be stirred up. We desire to wait with thee, and walk with thee, and work together with thee.

Grant unto us, we beseech of thee, the influence of thy Spirit, that shall

stir up all the springs of hope in us, that shall minister to us things which are higher than the senses. We pray that we may love and labor in a sphere of divine activities, so that we shall be sure of success.

And now we commend to thee all those who are in thy presence—and each one severally. Discern the hearts. Behold each one's need; and grant thy blessing to each one according to his necessity, and not according to his wisdom in asking. There are those who struggle with poverty. There are those who are in the midst of care, and are harassed day by day. There are those who are burdened—heavily laden. Bring all of them within the sphere of thy mercies. May they receive the loving nature of God. There are those who are in deep affliction. There are those upon whom the waves have rolled, overwhelming them. There are some who have sunk while attempting to walk across the stormy sea to Jesus. O Lord, we pray that thou wilt console those whom no earthly nature can comfort. Grant the comfort of thine own royal nature to them. May those who sink in tribulation be buoyed up as upon the ocean-heart of God. We pray that they may be able to trust in thee, not alone when they lose sight of the way in which they lack comfort, but above all when it is night, and they see no way, and have no refuge but God. And we pray that thou wilt grant that out of afflictions and bereavements and trials of every kind may come forth the pure gold of a richer Christian experience. We pray that the dross of tribulation may be consumed, and that faith may abide, and that the strength of heart may grow, and that as the outward man perishes day by day, the inward man may be renewed. And so may we be strong in holy thoughts—stronger in a true and disinterested kindness—stronger in the faith of God's goodness; stronger in the hope of immortality; stronger in that patience which awaits every trial, and takes every needful and inevitable cup, however bitter; stronger in the belief that death itself is the opening of the gate of heaven.

Grant that so by all our knowledge of God, by all that comes upon us from without or from within, we may find ourselves borne by the hand of our Teacher toward those nobler virtues of a Christian manhood which thou hast ordained for us.

We pray that thou wilt bless those who stand in the family relation, to whom thou hast committed thy little ones, and who are rearing them in affection, not for their own prosperity in this world only, but rather for God and for immortality. Grant that parents may never let go the thought of their ownership in their children. In all their aberrations, in all their inexperience, in all their sufferings, in all their sickness, may they still feel that they are God's little ones, and that he loves them more than the parent can, and is caring for them, and will care for them.

We commit to thine holy care all those who are young; all those who are emerging from control into self-control; all those who are taking their first steps upon the plane of manhood. We pray that they may be fortified. May their hearts maintain the simplicity of virtue. May they still maintain faith in God, and good will toward men, and walk uprightly and surely, and aspire, not for the things of this world alone, but for that more glorious inheritance which awaits them in the kingdom of their Father.

We pray that thou wilt bless our Sabbath Schools and our Bible Classes, and all that are taught therein, and all who teach them. We pray that the blessing of God which hath been with us so far in the year may still company with us.

Bless all who have been gathered by the faithfulness of thy servants out of the world and from their evil habits. Confirm them in good, and make it easier for them to overcome the temptations of the devil.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing upon those who shall go forth

into the streets, and into jails, and hospitals, and prisons, and every where, that they may find the lost and save them. May they be led by thy divinest Spirit. May they have the spirit of the gospel in themselves, and be able to impart it to others.

We pray, O Lord, that all thy churches may shine as lights in the midst of this great city. May all thy servants be strengthened to declare the counsels of God among men. We pray for the spread of religion, pure and undefiled. We pray that thou wilt bring together more and more perfectly all classes of men. Wilt thou bless all conditions of life.

We pray for intelligence and morality and piety. We pray for purity and truth and justice.

We beseech of thee that thy kingdom may come, not in our land alone, but in all nations. Hasten that day when wars shall no longer break out between nations. May peace prevail.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt guide the counsels of those who are appointed to take charge of the things which pertain to the national welfare. Remember the President of these United States, and all those who are in authority with him. Remember legislators and magistrates. May this great nation be blessed in those who are set to rule over it.

Remember those who govern in all nations. May they govern with moderation, and in the fear of God, and for the welfare of this people.

And may that day hasten when there shall be no more ignorance and superstition, but when knowledge and godliness shall rule in all the earth.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

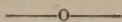
PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word of instruction, and grant that every day we may be stimulated to a wiser life, and to better attainments. May we not call upon thee to do our work, but wilt thou help us by stirring us up mightily to do thy work. Work in us to will and to do. Grant, when we desire, that we may feel that thou art moving upon our desires. And so may we rouse ourselves up to more faithfulness, and more continuity, and greater and wiser effort.

We pray that thou wilt bless the services of the morning. Go with us to our several homes. May this be a day of blossoming with joy to all. May we love one another more because it is the Lord's day, and be more and more grateful because of it. May we think of all the favors of the week. While we remember our sins and transgressions, and repent and mourn over them, grant that higher than these may be the flame of gratitude and holy trust. Grant that we may have hope in the future. May we not live as children of God, like slaves; may we walk as those who are heirs of heaven, worthy of our vocation. And may men see that there is nobility in us and upon us, not of outward things but of our interior nature. May we have nobler thoughts, and take pride in that which is good. May we have a nobler conception of things that are godlike. And so may we overcome our easily besetting sins, and reach that line where there is no sin, but joy forever.

And to thy name, Father, Son and Spirit, shall be the praise. *Amen.*

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